This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

LANE MEDICAL LIBRARY STANFORD
2 45 0441 1955

CHARMS OR AMULETS

FOR

SOME DISEASES OF THE EYE,

AND

A FEW ANCIENT BELIEFS ABOUT THE ECLIPSE,

BEING

TWO PAPERS READ BEFORE THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BOMBAY,

BY

JIVANJI JAMSHEDJI MODI, B.A.

Bombay:
PRINTED AT THE
...N SOCIETY'S STEAM PRESS, BYCULLA.

1894.

GR
600
M72
1894
LANE
HIST

LANE
MEDICAL LIBRARY
Seidel Collection
HISTORY OF MEDICINE
AND NATURAL SCIENCES

CHAR
SOME D

61752

YALE LIBRARY

Charms or Amulets

FOR SOME

DISEASES OF THE EYE.

(*Read on the 28th March* 1894.)

FAITH in the virtue of charms and amulets is common to almost all nations and all ages. The belief has been prevalent at one time or another, among almost all countries. It is a common belief in many countries, even now, that the mere carrying of certain medical preparations or plants on the body of a person, has the power of healing diseases. They say that similar faith has not entirely ceased in England even at the present time.

Pieces of parchment with passages from the Bible were carried about by the Jews on their bodies as amulets, and they were known as phylacteries. Pieces of paper with passages from the Koran are carried about by the Arabs under the name of Tâviz (amulets). One very often comes across such amulets among the Hindus. The subject of this paper is a similar charm or amulet prepared by a respectable Parsee family at Nowsaree for a complaint of the eye known as ઢેઢું (ulcer of the cornea).

The charm is known there by the name of કુલાનો દોરો *i.e.*, the thread for the ulcer of the cornea. A large number of people afflicted with that complaint go to Nowsaree from adjoining villages to take the charm from the Parsee family. Later on I will also give the text of a Persian amulet with passages from ancient Avesta texts. The use of that amulet is enjoined generally for all kinds of eye complaints.

As an instance of the still surviving belief in the virtue of amulets, is mentioned the case of the anodyne necklace which is made up of beads formed from the roots of bryony and which is suspended from the necks of infants with the object of helping the process of their teething. It sometimes happens that the particular plant, used in the charm, is believed to possess the medicinal properties of curing a particular disease if taken internally. The popular belief, then transfers the efficiency of internal application to mere external application and turns the medicinal plant into a mere charm or amulet. How far that is true in the case of the charm I am describing this evening, I leave it to medical members of our Society to determine.

The plant whose root I have placed on the table for the inspection of the members of our Society, is known at Nowsaree as વાર મોગરો (vâr mogrô), and is used, as I have said, as a charm or an extraordinary cure for a complaint in the eye known as કુલ. It is identified by Dr. Lisboa as "Jasminum Pubescens," coming nearer to "Jasminum Rottlenarum." Dr. Lisboa says, that its uses are not known, and that, like the flowers of all Jasminums, its flowers are more or less scented.

They say that there lived in Nowsaree, about 50 years ago, a Parsee gentleman, named Sorabjee. One day a fakir happened to pass by his door and was pleased with his looks. To show him his liking for him, he taught him a cure for the ulcer. He showed him the plant in the adjoining gardens and fields and asked him to follow the following instructions to make the

application of the plant perfectly efficacious as a cure. He also said that the cure could only be produced by Sorabjee or some male members of the family in direct line of descent from him.

The person who is in the direct line of male descent from Sorabjee has to go to the place where the plant grows, on a Saturday evening and invite the plant for the next morning. "તને આણીઆવે" is the Gujarati phrase used at Nowsaree for the invitation. The process of this invitation consists in placing a few grains of rice at the root of the plant and saying "I will take you away to-morrow for the cure."

The man must go to the plant early in the morning the next day, *i.e.*, Sunday, before washing himself and dig out the root. The root, after its being dug and cut out from the plant, must, on no account, be allowed to touch again the mother earth. It must be dried and not allowed to touch any wood. It must be kept suspended from a wall by a nail. Women in their menses, men after their wet dreams, and persons in the state of such temporary uncleanliness must, on no account, touch these roots, otherwise they lose all their so-called medicinal properties.

To prepare the thread, it is necessary that the yarn must have been prepared by a spinster. Some say that it is necessary to do so on the ફાલ્ગુનીયેાદમ day. Seven threads of the yarn are woven into one which is then put round the root, so as to pass thrice over it.

If the patient has the ulcer in the left eye, he is to put on the thread on the right ear and *vice versâ*. Before so putting it on, the smoke of frank-incense must be passed over it.

The person carrying the thread for the patient should take care not to put himself in any state of uncleanliness. Again, the patient must on no account let it fall on the ground or on his bed. If it falls on the ground he is to send for quite another thread. If it falls on a sleeping bed it must be again submitted to the process of passing the smoke of frank-incense over it. It must be immediately removed when the patient is free

from his complaint, otherwise it may further spoil the eye. The family which inherits the right of producing the medicinal properties in the above-described manner is prohibited from charging any fees to the patients for preparing the threads. But they sometimes ask the patients to feed the dogs of the streets, as an act of charity in return for the cure. It is said that hundreds of men of all religions from the adjoining villages go to Nowsaree to take the thread so prepared, for the patients afflicted with ulcers in their villages. It is very noticeable that in India while at times illiterate people of different religions knock one another's head for their so-called zeal for their religion, at other times they resort to the priests of the hostile communities for the sake of charms and amulets. It is not rare for a Hindoo to go to a Mahomedan Moola, a Parsee Mobed or a native Christian Padre, nor is it rare for a Mahomedan, a Parsee or a Christian to go to a Hindoo Brahamin, and so on, to fetch from him a charm or an amulet blessed by incantations from the scriptures of that very religion which they seem to hate with words and sometimes with blows.

The invitation to the plant in the above case on a Saturday evening, to be prepared to be taken away for the ulcer the next morning, seems to be something like an invitation to the spirit of the tree. It reminds us of the belief in the transference of a disease to a tree or to the spirit in the tree. In Ennemoser's History of Magic (Vol. II., p. 206) we find the following reference to the belief which is somewhat akin to the invitation to the plant in our above story of Nowsaree.

"Amongst the forms of adjuration we find the commencement thus, 'Twig, I bind thee; fever now leave me.' Westendorp relates the following Netherlands practice: 'Whoever has the ague, let him go early in the morning to an old willow tree, tie three knots in a branch, and say, "Good morning old one! I give thee the cold; good morning, old one!" He must then

turn round quickly and run off as fast as he can without looking behind him."

This belief in the transference of a disease to something else reminds us of the so-called cure for another complaint of the eye, known as the આંજણી (stye).

The best remedy believed in, for curing this, is the knocking at midnight, at the door of the house of a man who has two living wives. While doing so he has to utter these words, "આંજણી ઘર ભાંજણી. આજે મને તો કાલે તુંને" *i.e.*, Stye! you are the breaker (of the peace) of a house. To-day it is my turn, to-morrow it will be yours."

This cure for the આંજણી reminds us of another cure for the same. The mere application of a dried bomaloe or Bombay duck upon the stye is believed to be efficacious, because the આંજણી (stye) is said to be of the Brahamin caste (બ્રાહ્મણી જાત). And as the Brahamins, being strict vegetarians, shudder at the sight of fish, so the stye being a Brahamin by caste, will shudder at the sight of the bomaloe and will immediately leave the eye of the patient on the application of that fish (1)

The above story, of a charm for the eye prepared by a respectable Parsee priestly family at the direction of a fakir, naturally leads us to inquire if there are any strictly Parsee charms or amulets for the eye spoken of in the old Persian books. We find nothing on the subject in the older books, but the later Persian Revâyats give a Tâviz or an amulet for curing all general complaints of the eye. I have taken the text of

---

Compare the following :—

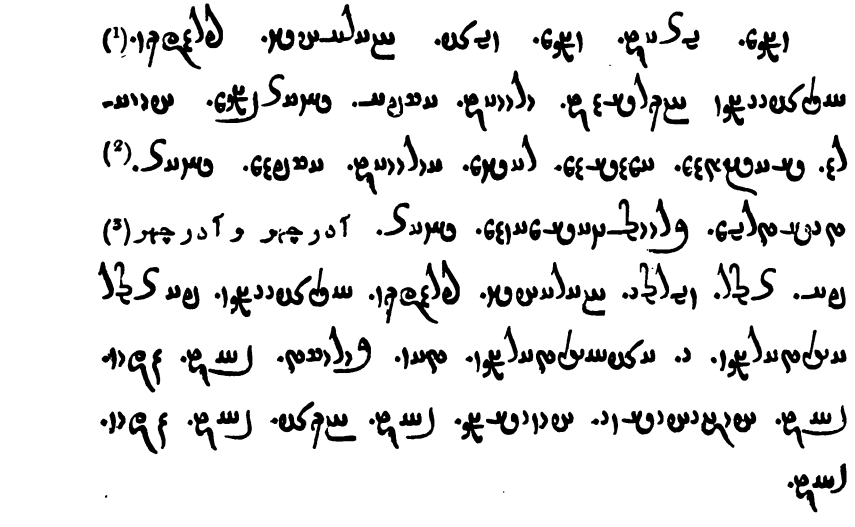
"A singular remedy is adopted against dyspnœa or fainting, which they call 'mountain sickness.' This they (the Kirgese) represent to themselves under the form of a young lady, before whom they utter to the patient, the most obscene and disgusting expressions, thinking thereby to shock the lady's modesty and drive her away."—*Chinese Central Asia, Vol. I., p.* 144, *by Dr. Lansdell*).

this amulet from the manuscript copy of the Revâyat-i-Burzô Kavâm-ud-din belonging to Mr. Edalji Kersaspji Antia, Zend teacher at the Sir Jamshedji Madressa. The text gives the following instruction as to how the amulet is to be put on

بر دست چپ بستن تا درد چشم دفع شود بواج بهرام ایزد گرفتن و بشتن

i.e., "To be tied on the left hand until the complaint of the eye is cured. To tie and untie it with the Bâj of Beheram Yazad."

The text of the amulet.



Translation.

"In the name of God. In the name of the strength and splendour of Fredun the son of Athawyân. We praise the swift-horsed Sun. We praise the immortal, glorious and

(1) We find these sentences also in the Pâzand portion of the Vanant yasht.

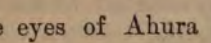
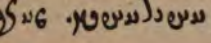
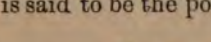
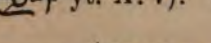
(2) This and the next sentence are taken from the Khurshed Nyâish.

(3) Here must be written the name of the patient, *e. g.* Ader Cheher son of Ader Cheher.

swift-horsed Sun. We praise the strong-eyed Tishtrya. May (so and so, *e. g.*, Ader Cheher the son of Ader Cheher), by virtue of the strength and power of the splendour of Fredun, the son of Athawyân, by virtue of the strength of the northern stars be healthy in body. May it be so. May there be good life and good marks. May it be good. May it be so."

The text of the amulet is written in a mixture of Avesta and Persian characters. Again it is written in Avesta, Pazand and a little of Pehelvi. It does not seem to be the production of a literary man, versed in the sacred books.

Now, it is worth inquiring why Hvarê Khshaêta (the Sun), Tishtrya (the star Sirius) and Fredun, the well-known monarch of the Peshdâdyan dynasty, alluded to by Sir Walter Scott in his Talisman, are mentioned in this Persian amulet or talisman.

The reason why the Sun, the star Tishtrya (Sirius) and other stars are mentioned in the amulet for the eye, seems to be that the old Persian books of the Avesta use a metaphorical language in which these luminaries are represented as possessing good strong eyes. Poets very often compare eyes with the sun, the moon, the stars and such heavenly bodies. For example the Sun is spoken of as the "bright eye and monarch of the world." So the Avesta speaks of the Sun and the Mithra as the eyes of Ahura Mazda (). ( yaçna LXVIII–22). Mithra the god of light is said to be the possessor of ten-thousand eyes-( yt. X. 7). The star Tishtrya is said to possess good strong eyes ( Khurshed Nyâish 7).

Now the reason why the name of Fredun is mentioned in this amulet is, that to this renowned monarch of the Peshdâ-

dyan dynasty of ancient Iran, are attributed by later traditions the supernatural powers of curing many diseases by charms and amulets. This Fredun is the Thraêtaona of the Avesta who is compared with the वेतन of the Vedas. He is spoken of in the Fravardin yasht (yt. XIII—131) as having discovered some cures for fevers, snake-bite, &c. The Pehelvi Dadastan-i-Dini alludes to this when it refers to him as a person knowing all kinds of medical cures. (XXXVII—35.) The Pâzand portion of the Vanant Yasht alludes to this fact. Mirkhond in his Rauzat-us-safa speaks of Fredun as being very friendly to physicians and as being an ardent student inquiring into the nature of human constitution.(1) Later books say that it is owing to his connection with all kinds of medicines and cures that the name of Fredun is mentioned in various Persian charms and amulets.

I beg to lay on the table for the inspection of members a ring which is the property of Dowager Lady Ruttonbai Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy It is intended to be used as a cure for the ulcer in the cornea of the eye. It is made of a kind of stone having on one side the form of an eye with the eye-ball and the white of the eye clearly marked. This amulet is enjoined to be passed over the eye several times every morning by some person other than the patient, and it is believed to lessen the ulcer or the opacity of the cornea gradually.

(1) Shea's Mirkhond, p. 172.

A few Ancient Beliefs

ABOUT

THE ECLIPSE

And a Few Superstitions Based on those Beliefs.

(*Read on the 25th April* 1894.)

THE last eclipse of the Sun on the sixth of this month has suggested to me, the subject of my paper this evening. Sitting on the verandah of my house the previous evening, I heard a few mill-hands talk various things about the phenomenon and about the customs to be observed on the occasion. I thought that an inquiry into the belief of the ancient Persians about the cause of the eclipse, a comparison of that belief with the beliefs of other ancient nations, and an enumeration of the superstitions based on those beliefs, would form a fitting subject for a paper before this Society. Hence this paper.

The ancient Aryans and the different nations that descended from them held a belief that the eclipse was the result of a fight between a hostile power and the Sun or Moon as the eclipse happened to be solar or lunar. Though according to Sir Monier Williams, Arya-bhata who lived in the fifth century after Christ, knew the true theory about the cause of the

eclipse, the Mâhabhârata points to a similar belief among the ancient Hindoos. Dowson thus describes the belief. (1)

"Râhu is a Daitya who is supposed to seize the sun and the moon and swallow them, thus obscuring their rays and causing eclipses. He was son of Viprachitti and Sinhikā, and is called by his metronymic, Sainhikeya. He had four arms, and his lower part ended in a tail. He was a great mischief-maker and when the gods had produced the Amrita by churning the ocean, he assumed a disguise and insinuating himself amongst them drank some of it. The sun and moon detected him and informed Vishnu, who cut off his head and two of his arms, but, as he had secured immortality, his body was placed in the stellar sphere, the upper parts, represented by a dragon's head, being the ascending node and the lower parts, represented by a dragon's tail, being Ketu the descending node. Râhu wreaks vengeance on the sun and moon by occasionally swallowing them." The same story is referred to in the Vishnu Purana. Thus it is the fight between the Daitya Râhu and the sun or moon that causes the solar or the lunar eclipse. According to Pictet (2) it is this story that has given the Sanscrit word râhugrâhai its secondary meaning of eclipse. The same authority gives different myths of the same kind prevalent in other nations. The Mongols have taken this belief from the Indians with this difference, that among them Aracho has taken the place of Râhu. The Scandinavians say that there are two wolves Sköll and Hati which always run after the sun and the moon. Hati which is also known by the name of Mânagarwr (the dog of the moon) will in the end devour the moon. It is this tradition that has given rise to the Burgundian phrase "May God save the moon from the wolves," which is used ironically for a distant danger.

---

(1) Dowson's Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology. The word Râhu.

(2) Les Origines Indo-Européennes, Tome II., p. 85.

The ancient Greeks at one time believed that Diana or the moon once fell in love with Endymion, the beautiful shepherd when he once slept unclothed on Mount Latmos and that the lunar eclipses were due to her absence from the Heavens to pay her frequent nocturnal visits to her lover on the earth.

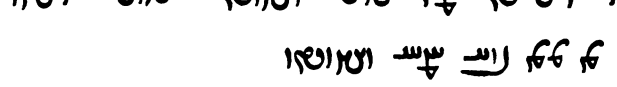
The Romans believed that the sorcerers and magicians, especially those of Thessally, had the power to bring the moon down to the earth from the heaven to aid them in their enchantments and that the eclipse was due to this attempt on the part of the magicians. The Chinese belief about the eclipse is thus described by Lewis Le Comte.(1) "All nations have ever been astonished at eclipses, because they could not discover the cause of them; there is nothing so extravagant as the several reasons some have given for it; but one would wonder that the Chinese, who as to Astronomy may justly claim seniority over all the world besides, have reasoned as absurdly on that point as the rest; they have fancied that in heaven there is a prodigious great dragon who is a professed enemy to the sun and moon and ready at all times to eat them up. For this reason as soon as they perceive an eclipse, they all render a terrible rattling with drums and brass kettles till the monster frightened at the noise lets go his prey . . . . While the astronomers are in the tower to make their observations the chief Mandarins belonging to the Lipon fall on their knees in a hall or court of the palace, looking attentively that way, and frequently bowing towards the sun to express the pity they take of him or rather to the dragon to beg him not to molest the world by depriving it of so necessary a planet." The same author later on thus describes what he saw during an eclipse.

"The Chinese were terribly alarmed, imagining that the earth was going suddenly to envelope in thick darkness. They

(1) A complete History of the Empire of China, by Lewis Le Comte, Jesuit, pp. 70 and 487.

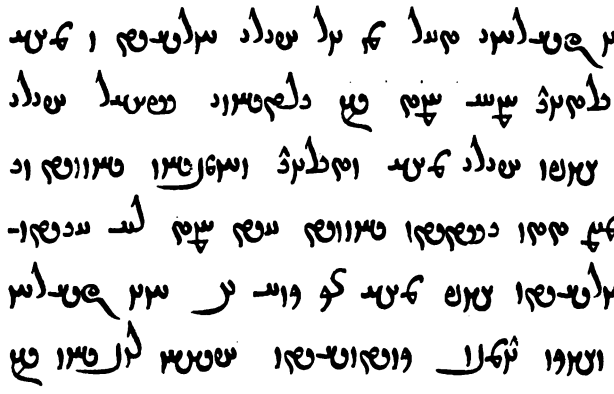
made a hideous noise all abroad to oblige the dragon to be gone. It is to this animal that they attribute all the disappearances of the stars, which come to pass, they say, because the celestial dragon being hunger-bit, holds at that time the sun or moon fast between his teeth with a design to devour them." (1)

Coming to the belief among the ancient Persians we find no reference to the eclipse in the oldest writings of the Avesta. Among the Pehelvi books we find the Dinkard only saying that the moon shines with the light of the sun. (2) It is the Dadistan-i-Dini (3) that attempts to explain the cause of the eclipse. The sixty-eighth question in that work runs as follows :



When something catches hold of the Moon or Sun, what is the cause (vahânê) of it ? and from what does it always catch hold ?

The reply is as follows :—



(1) A complete History of the Empire of China, by Lewis Le Comte, Jesuit, p. 487.

(2) Dastur Peshotan, Vol. I., 51-6.

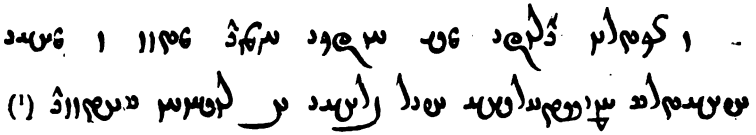
(3) S. B. E., Vol. XVIII., West's Pahalavi Texts, II., Ch. 69.

Translation.

"Two opaque (avin) dark faces (or bodies) move and revolve far below the sun and the moon. When in the usual revolution of the sky, they pass below the sun or below the moon, it (*i. e.*, one of the two opaque bodies) becomes a covering and stands as a curtain ( ) over the sun. Thus it is that the sun or the moon is not seen. Of both these opaque bodies one is called the head and the other the tail. Their motion is explained in the calculation of astronomers. However, in standing in the way of, and in covering those luminaries, they do not thereby (actually) raise a covering over those luminaries. From (the fact of) the luminaries being, in a place pure and free from opposition, and from (the fact of) the (two) concealers (of light) being far below them, there results no diminution of light in those luminaries, except this, that their light is concealed from the world, and that their all-adorning energy of supplying light to the earth during that time is incomplete."

It appears from this passage that the ancient Persians believed that the eclipse was caused by two opaque dark

bodies interfering between us and the luminaries, that these dark bodies moved much below the luminaries, and that their cutting off, of the light of the luminaries was temporary. We do not find in the Dadistan-i-Dini any clear reference to the two opaque dark bodies as being distinctly hostile to the sun and the moon, but the following passage in the Shikand Gumanik Vijar shows, as Dr. West says, that these bodies were hostile to the luminaries:



(1)

"And these two fiends that are greatly powerful who are opponents of the planetary sun and moon move below the splendour of (those) two luminaries."(2)

The idea of there being some heavenly bodies opposed to other heavenly bodies is not entirely foreign to Persian belief. According to the Zadsparam (3) some heavenly bodies are said to belong to the good creation, and others, for example, the planets, to the evil creation. Again, there is another thing to be noticed in the Mâhabhârata version of the cause of the eclipse and the Dadistan-i-Dini version. One of the two interfering dark bodies is spoken of in the Dadistan-i-Dini as the head (sar) and the other the tail (dûmb). So in the Mâhabhârata, Râhu's body being cut into two pieces by Vishnu, his upper parts were represented by a dragon's head and his lower part by a dragon's tail.

Not only do these references in old books point to a belief in a fight between a hostile power and the luminary as the

(1) The text published by Dastur Hoshang and Dr. West, p. 199, ch. IV., 46.
(2) S. B. E. XXIX. Dr. West.
(3) S. B. E. V. West's Pehelvi texts I., ch. III., 4.

cause of the eclipse, but as Pictet points out, the very words for eclipses in different nations point to that belief. For example the Persians speak of the eclipse as گرفت ماہتاب or گرفت آفتاب *i.e.*, the capture of the moon or the capture of the sun.(1) The Pehelvi word 𐭥𐭠𐭧𐭤𐭥𐭠𐭭𐭲𐭭 vakhdûntan used in the above passage of the Dadistan-i-Dini is also a synonym of Persian 'giraftan' and means "to catch hold of, to seize." The Sanscrit ग्रहण which has come to mean an eclipse in Gujarati has also the same primary meaning. According to Pictet 'camman,' the old Irish word for eclipse, signifies 'combat.'

Again a few proverbs of different nations also point to the belief that a fight with a hostile power was the cause of the eclipse of the luminary. For example, the tradition of a fight between two wolves and the sun or the moon being the cause of the eclipse, has given rise to a proverb among the Burgundians which is used ironically for a distant danger but which literally means "May God save the moon from the wolves." The Tamils also hold the belief of the fight and so we find in one of their quartrains, illustrating 'generosity to fallen foes', a reference to this belief. An old quartrain says :—

"Worthy men, when they behold whore foes are foiled, themselves too feel sore-abashed and do not hasten on to crush them. Behold the strong invulnerable dragon draws not near the moon (to swallow it) when it is in its tender crescent days."(2) Again take our common Gujarati proverb ગ્રહણ લાગવું. When two persons begin a quarrel we generally say ગ્રહણ લાગ્યું *i.e.*, the eclipse has commenced.

We will now speak of some of the eclipses immortalized in history, as having produced, by a superstitious belief in them,

(1) *Vide* the word گرفت in Dr. Steingass's Persian-English Dictionary.

(2) Náladyár. Four Hundred quartrains in Tamil by G. Pope, p. 155.

marvellous changes in the destiny of great men and great armies.

Eclipses were generally regarded by almost all the ancient nations as precursors of some events of great importance. Herodotus supplies us with some instances. When the famous bridge over the Hellespont was completed by the Persian king Xerxes, the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun struck the monarch with alarm. "At the moment of departure," says Herodotus, "The sun suddenly quitted his seat in the heaven, and disappeared, though there were no clouds in sight, but the sky was clear and serene. Day was thus turned into night; whereupon Xerxes, who saw and remarked the prodigy, was seized with alarm, and sending at once for the Magians, inquired of them the meaning of the portent.

They replied—"God is foreshadowing to the Greeks the destruction of their cities; for the sun foretells for them, and the moon for us." So Xerxes thus instructed, proceeded on his way with great gladness of heart."([1])

According to the same authority it was a solar eclipse that had frightened the Spartan general Cleombrotus into recalling his army from the task of building the wall at the Isthmus. ([2]) Again it was an eclipse, known subsequently as the "Eclipse of Thales," being predicted by him, that had frightened the two fighting nations the Lydians and the Medians, into entering into some terms of peace. ([3])

Malcolm, who believed that Cyaxares the Median king spoken of by Herodotus, was the same as Kaikáoos of Firdousi, points to a passage in the Shâh-nameh ([4]) as referring to this above eclipse predicted by Thales of Miletus. In the expedition of Kâoos to Mazenderan, according to Firdousi, Kâoos and his army were

([1]) Rawlinson's Herodotus, Bk. I., Ch. 37.
([2]) Bk. IX., 10.
([3]) Bk. I., 74.
([4]) Vuller I., p. 328.

" struck with a sudden blindness which had been foretold by a magician." Malcolm says, that the predicting magician is no other than Thales of Miletus and that the blindness was nothing but the darkness caused by the eclipse. (1) I think it is a far-fetched comparison of events suggested to Malcolm by his zeal to find striking resemblances between the events of the reigns of the two monarchs. If Firdousi's account of the phenomenon refers to anything, it is to a sudden volcanic eruption.

From Tacitus we learn that Drusus the son of Tiberius made use of the occurrence of a lunar eclipse, which occurred during the time of a revolt by three Roman legions under his command, to frighten his soldiers and thus to suppress the revolt. Tacitus thus describes the event, " The night that followed seemed big with some fatal disaster when an unexpected phenomenon put an end to the commotion. In a clear and serene sky the moon was suddenly eclipsed. This appearance, in its natural cause not understood by the soldiers, was deemed a prognostic, denouncing the fate of the army. The planet, in its languishing state, represented the condition of the legions; if it recovered its former lustre, the efforts of the men would be covered with success. . . . . The crowd in the meantime stood at gaze: every gleam of light inspired the men with joy, and the sudden gloom depressed their hearts with grief. The clouds condensed and the moon was supposed to be lost in utter darkness. A melancholy horror siezed the multitude; and melancholy is sure to engender superstition. A religious panic spread through the army. The appearance in the heavens foretold eternal labour to the legions and all lamented that by their crimes they had called down upon themselves the indignation of the gods. Drusus took advantage of the moment." Tacitus then describes at some length how Drusus by promises and by the

(1) History of Persia, Vol. I., p. 515.

terror caused by the eclipse, subdued the spirit of the insurgent soldiers (Annals Vol. I., 28) (1).

Plutarch, in his Lives (2) refers to several eclipses which had agitated the minds of great men and great nations in antiquity. An eclipse of the sun at the time of the death of Romulus had greatly agitated the minds of the Romans. An eclipse at the time when Pericles was embarking for an expedition against the Pelopnesians had frightened the pilot and his men. "The whole fleet was in readiness, and Pericles on board his own galley when there happened an eclipse of the sun. This sudden darkness was looked upon as an unfavourable omen and threw them into the greatest consternation. Pericles, observing that the pilot was much astonished and perplexed, took his cloak and having covered his eyes with it, asked him, "If he found anything terrible in that, or considered it as a sad presage?" Upon his answering in the negative, he said, "Where is the difference between this and the other, except that something bigger than my cloke causes the eclipse?" (3)

In the last Macedonian War, the Roman Consul Æmilius Paullus, predicting the occurrence of an eclipse, by his superior knowledge of Astronomy, prepared his soldiers for the event and cheered them up while the phenomenon spread terror and alarm in the Macedonian army. According to Livy, it was Sulpicius-Gallus, a general of the Consul, who predicted the eclipse. The event is thus described. "An eclipse of the Moon, it was known to Sulpicius, would occur that night, and he thought it prudent to prepare the soldiers for it. When the eventful moment arrived, the soldiers went out indeed, to assist the moon in her labours, with the usual clamour of their kettles and pans, nor omitted to offer her the light of their torches; but the scene was one of amusement, rather than fear.

(1) The Works of Tacitus by A. Murphy, Vol. I.

(2) Plutarch's Lives, translated by J. and W. Langhorne, Vol. I., p. 88.

(3) Ibid., p. 299.

In the Macedonian camp on the other hand, superstition produced the usual effect of horror and alarm; and on the following day the result of the battle corresponded to the feelings of the night." According to Plutarch, the Consul, Æmilius Paulus, sacrificed eleven heifers to the moon and several oxen to Hercules on that occasion. (1)

When Dion was preparing an expedition against Dionysius of Syracuse, an eclipse of the moon alarmed his soldiers. Miltas, the diviner, "assured them that it portended the sudden obscurity of something that was at present glorious; that this glorious object could be no other than Dionysius, whose lustre would be extinguished on their arrival in Sicily." (2)

In the expedition of the Athenians led by Nicias against the Syracusans, a lunar eclipse retarded the retreat of the Athenians.(3) "Everything accordingly was prepared for embarkation, but in the night there happened an eclipse of the moon, at which Nicias and all the rest were struck with a great panic, either through ignorance or superstition . . . . . They looked upon it, therefore, as a strange and preternatural phenomenon, a sign by which the gods announced some great calamity . . . . . Supposing the eclipse a prodigy, it could not, as Philochorus observes, be inauspicious to those who wanted to fly, but on the contrary, very favourable; for whatever is transacted with fear, seeks the shadow of darkness; light is the worst enemy. Besides, on other occasions, as Anticlides remarks in his commentaries, there were only three days that people refrained from business after an eclipse of either sun or moon; whereas Nicias wanted to stay another entire revolution of the moon, as if he could not see her as bright as ever the moment she passed the shadow caused by the interposition of the earth."

---

(1) Ibid., Vol. I., p. 450.
(2) Ibid., Vol. III., p. 392.
(3) Ibid., Vol. II., p. 242.

Now we come to the question of the different customs and usages observed by different people at the time of the eclipse, (*a*) either with a view to help the luminary in his supposed difficulty, (*b*) or to threaten and frighten his supposed opponent, so as to force him to slacken his strong grasp of the luminary.

To help the luminary in his difficulty, some resort to self-sacrifices, offerings, or prayers. For example, the Mexicans fasted during the eclipses just as our Hindoo friends do. But it is difficult to determine exactly, what it was that led people to fast during the eclipses. Perhaps it was a pious desire to participate in the grief of the luminary that was supposed to have been attacked by an opponent. Some are frightened into fasting, lest the extraordinary event may bring some mischief during the process of eating. Again, it is possible the origin of the custom may be due to the desire of undergoing a little privation in order to avert a greater mishap. It is a little sacrifice to propitiate the powers to avert a greater danger. The latter view is illustrated by a custom of the Mexican women, who, they say, maltreated themselves on such occasions, while their young girls got themselves bled in their arms. This belief of the Mexican women, brings us to some of the observances observed by Indian women on such occasions. Women who are *enceinte* are advised to lie down during the eclipse, so as to avoid coming under the shadow of the eclipse, lest the evil influence of Râhu might overtake them and their children in embryo. They, as well as their husbands, must avoid cutting or breaking anything during the time of the eclipse. If they do not do so, their future children are affected some way or other. Children with cut ears or defective parts of some members of the body, are sometimes pointed out to us, as the result of carelessness, or obstinacy on the part of the parents in not properly observing this rule of abstaining from cutting or breaking anything during the time of the eclipse. The ancients *believed in the* influence of the moon on women. The moon had

all feminine characteristics, and was therefore a female goddess while the sun possessed the male characteristics. The sun and moon as such, represented the creating and conceiving powers of nature. That being the case, it is not surprising to find women, especially those in the state of conception, ready to show in various ways their sympathy in the grief of the luminary when attacked by a supposed opponent. Among the customs observed by the ancient Romans, we find a peculiar mode of helping the luminary to get out of his supposed difficulty. It was the custom of lighting torches and candle-sticks and of pointing them to the sky to recall the light of the eclipsed luminary. Plutarch refers to this custom in his life of Æmilius Paullus. (1)

Again the custom of raising cries and creating noise and bustle, with a view, either to help the luminaries in their hours of trouble, or to frighten their adversaries, seems to be very old. It was prevalent among the Romans of the first century after Christ. As pointed out by Pictet, Juvenal in his well-known satire on women refers to this custom when he says (2):—

"Such a power of words falls from her, you would say so many pans, so many bells were being struck at the same time. Let no one henceforth fatigue trumpets or brasses; single handed she will be able to succour the moon in labour." As Lewis observes, this was due to the old Roman belief referred to above, that magicians and witches were endeavouring to bring the moon down from heaven to aid them in their enchantments and that she could be relieved from her sufferings by loud noises, the beating of brass, and the sounding of trumpets, produced to drown the voices of the enchanters. They say that the home of this custom of creating a noise with trumpets at the time of the eclipse, was ancient Egypt where Isis the moon was honoured with the play of drums and trumpets. It is usual, even now, to

(1) Plutarch's Lives translated by Langhorne, Vol. I., p. 150.
(2) Juvenalis Satiræ, by Lewis-Satire, VI., 440-43.

see that in some of the Native States the appearance of the new moon is announced with a flourish of trumpets and a play of drums. Tacitus also refers to this custom among the Romans. Describing the lunar eclipse which occurred during the time of the revolt of the three Roman legions in the time of Emperor Tiberius, he says "In a clear and serene sky the moon was suddenly eclipsed . . . . . To assist the moon in her labours the air resounded with the clamour of brazen instruments, with the sound of trumpets and other warlike music." (1)

The custom was prevalent even in the middle ages. It is said that "the people of Turin used to greet eclipses with loud cries for which St. Maximus of Turin who lived in the fifth century after Christ had to rebuke them. Two centuries later St. Eloi is said to have preached against this superstition." According to Birgman the Mongols also made loud cries, to save the luminaries from their enemies. The custom is still prevalent to a certain extent. Mr. Child (2) says of the Siamese that at the time of the eclipse "guns, crackers, gongs, and other instruments of rattling and confusion innumerable, are brought into requisition to frighten the fabulous monster Râhu from his effort to swallow the sun or moon." The Siamese resort to this custom also on the occasion of their new year's day to expel evil spirits from the precincts of the city and thus to bring about prosperity and happiness. Pictet says that this custom is still prevalent among the Greenlanders and also among several tribes of Africa.

In India this custom is said to be more or less prevalent in several parts ; but on this side of the country, the principal means believed to be efficacious and therefore adopted to relieve the luminary is to present offerings and to give alms in charity. Hence it is not uncommon to see Hindoo women throw દીલ દાણ્ર (*i.e.*, seed and grain) high in the air towards

(1) The Annals of Tacitus, Bk. I., 28. Translated by A. Murphy, Vol. I.

(2) The Pearl of Asia, or Five Years in Siam, by J. T. Child, p. 261.

the luminary supposed to be in affliction, with the words છોડ ગ્રહણ, છોડ ગ્રહણ *i.e.* Leave your grasp. The words very often heard in the Bombay streets announcing the commencement of the eclipse, *viz.*, દીએ દાન છુટે ગ્રહણ tend to the same belief. It is generally the lower classes such as the Mângs and the Dhers that go about in Bombay streets, uttering the above words, and asking for alms. The presence of these lower classes is accounted for by the following story which is on its face a corrupted version of the original Mâhabhârata story given above. I give the story as narrated to me by a Hindoo mill-hand on the evening preceding the last solar eclipse.

Rama on his return from Lankâ, after the victorious fight with Râvan, gave a feast to his victorious army. Mâhadev and Pârvati were serving the meals. Mâhadev drew the attention of Pârvati to the presence of a low class Mâng in the assembly and asked her to be careful, and to serve him the meals from a distance. This drew the attention of Râm who slew the Mâng boy for daring to go there to mar the sacredness of the feast. The mother of the boy took up the head, placed it in a basket and tried to resuscitate it with fresh water. With the basket containing the head of her lost son, she goes to the gods and goddesses to ask for her meals. In turn she goes to the sun and the moon and asks meals from them threatening to touch them in case of refusal and thus to desecrate their holy character. It is the shadow of her basket that causes the eclipse and so it is to remove this Mâng woman, this importunate creditor, from the sun and the moon, that people are asked, to give offerings to the luminaries and alms in charity to Mângs and Dhers on this earth. This story explains why it is that Mângs go about for alms and why the words દીએ દાન છૂટે ગ્રહણ are uttered in our streets.

It was usual among the Parsees until a few years ago to say prayers on such occasions and to recite especially the Mâhbokhtâr Nyâish in the praise of the moon during lunar eclipses. Mr. Gaspard Drouville said of the Zoroastrians in Persia in the

early part of this century that (1) " Ils adressent leurs prières au soleil, et les-jours d' eclipse sont pour eux jours de désolations et de deuil; ils se posterent alors la face contre terre et ne se relevent qu'au retour des rayons de cet astre."

(1) Voyages en Perse faites en 1813, Tome II., p. 193.

H133
M

On the Chariot of the Goddess (मातानोरथ.) A supposed remedy *for* Driving *out an* Epidemic.

By Mr. Jivanji Jimshedji Modi, B.A.

In almost all nations, weapons of war were considered essential in religious gatherings. The gods and goddesses of the ancients had their instruments of war just as their warriors and heroes had. As warriors wanted weapons to strike the physical foes of their country, so gods and angels wanted them to strike the spiritual enemies of the people they protected. So we find that the religious processions of many nations carried weapons with them. Even the free-masons carried swords in their processions as symbols of authority. A Parsee youth (Nâvar) initiated into the order of priesthood leads the procession to the fire-temple, carrying

a *gurz*, a kind of club in his hand as a warrior. He indicates thereby that just as the angel Mithra has his own club to strike on the heads of the *Daêvas*, *i.e.*, evil persons and influences (vazrem hunivikhtem kameredhê paiti daêvanâm) he had his own to curb his spiritual foes. He carries it as a symbol to declare that thenceforward he will use his mental powers and spiritual faculties in the suppression of all evils. So in almost all nations instruments of war were considered to be necessary requisites for religious processions.

Now in ancient times chariots were considered to be a part and parcel of military requisites. So they played a very prominent part both in religious gatherings and in warfare. Warriors are called Rathaêshtârs (*i.e.*, those who stood up in the Ratha (રથ Lat. Rota,) *i.e.*, the chariot) because they fought in chariots. As warriors fought against physical enemies, so gods and goddesses fought against spiritual enemies. So gods and goddesses had their chariots just in the same way as warriors had. In the Avesta, Ardviçura Anâhita, an Yazata presiding over waters is represented as moving in a chariot. Mithra, the angel presiding over light had his chariot just as Phœbus, the sun-god, had his own, among the Greeks.

In India also the Ratha or the chariot has been playing a very prominent part in religious or semi-religious gatherings and processions. Among the lower classes it has lost much of the original symbolic signification. In case of epidemics like plague, cholera and small-pox, it is the village mâtâ, *i.e.*, the village goddess, that has a good deal to do with it. So one of the supposed ways to drive out an epidemic from a village overtaken with it, is (માતાની રથ કાઢાડવી) mâtâni rath kâhdvi, *i.e.*, to take out of the village the chariot of the village goddess. The goddess is supposed to be appeased thereby and the epidemic transferred to an adjoining village. The object of this paper is to present a few notes of three cases that fell under my observation, one at Tithal near Bulsâr, another at Jalâlpur near Nowsâri, and another on the Ghaut Road leading to Satârâ from Mâhâbleshwar.

The plague epidemic that was raging for some time this year *near the adjoining* town of Bulsâr had made its appearance in

solitary cases in the village of Tithal. This alarmed the poor villagers, and they resolved to drive away the epidemic from their village in their mâtâ's rath. During the evening of the 17th of May they made all preparations for the chariot procession.

Their raths or chariots consisted of small pieces of wooden planks standing on wheels. They were about a foot in length and breadth. The chariot procession started in the morning of the eighteenth from their small village temple. All the villagers accompanied it. The raths were decorated with small bannerettes. Two villagers carried the two chariots in their hands. A cock and a goat were carried by others. Others carried a cocoanut, betelnuts, cooked food, etc. The procession was led by a Bhagat or a priest.

It is not every village that has a Bhagat of its own. The one at Tithal named Revlo Girio રેવલો જીરીઓ was specially sent for from Pândooroghad, a ruined hill fort about four miles distant. These Bhagats are the village priests as well as doctors. They abstain from meat and intoxicating drinks of all kinds. They have certain religious observances to be observed. The Bhagat at Tithal was paid Rs. 5 for the day's work.

The procession coming at the outskirts of the village on the road leading to Shegvi stopped there for some time, and the Bhagat recited several incantations. The following are some of the lines of the incantations, the whole of which they refuse to recite except on proper occasions, and which it is difficult for us to follow when they are recited in a sing song way:—

પવનનો સપતો વારી ઘેઓ
ઓ દુનીઆમાં આપણું કામ ચાલે
વા ભમારો ચાલીઓ તે આપણે વારીઓ
ઓ અમી માતાનું કામ અમાઇ કહેવાય.
ઓ દુનીઆને વિષે અમાઇ કામ ચાલે તે વાલી લેવાનું છે.
અમો મારજોર કરીને દુનીઆને વાસતે વાળી લેશું.
ઓ દુનીઆમાં ચાલે તે કામ અમાઇ કહેવાય, દેવતાનું કહેવાય.
તે દુનીઆમાં દેવતાનું કામ આપલીને કીનારે ચાલે.

(૧) વાદલ કા. અપ.

તે આપલીને મીનારેનું કામ અમો વારી લઇએ.

એ વીએાદી તે પરમેશ્વરની ને માતાની કહેવાય.

These are some of the words of the incantations taken down from the lips of the Bhagat to learn what ideas are given vent to in the incantations. I give here a rough translation of the incantation as far as I can understand it. " Counteract the influence of this gust of wind, so that our affairs in this world may continue. Let us counteract the influence of this injurious wind. This work which is the work of Agnimâtâ (*i. e.*, the goddess presiding over fire) can be called our work. We have to counteract the influence of this work about this world. By force and violence (by all possible means) we shall counteract the influence of this (injurious wind or epidemic). All that happens in this world is ours and is brought about by gods. The work of the gods in that world is performed on the edge of clouds, *i. e.*, in heavens. We shall counteract the influence of the work originated on the edge of the clouds. This disease is said to come from the great God, from the goddess.

The above incantations of these simple folks show their belief in the following facts—

(1) That all epidemics are carried from one place to another by winds and that they are the results of injurious winds.

(2) That their gods and goddesses have something to do with them.

(3) These gods or goddesses work in the clouds.

These incantations were recited by the Bhagat on the outskirt of the village in a chanting way, and in touching plaintive tones. He nodded his head heavily during the utterance like one who believed himself to be possessed by the spirit.*

The incantations being finished the whole procession marched from Tithal to the adjoining village of Shegvi, whose inhabitants had received, a day or two previous, a friendly

(૨) બીમારી. મરકી.

intimation of the arrival of the chariot of the *mâtâ*. So they had prepared themselves to receive the chariot of the goddess (હાથો હાથ) in their own hands directly from the hands of the new-comers. The villagers of Tithal returned to their village with the belief that they had driven away the epidemic from their village and passed it on to some other place.

The villagers of Shegvi in their turn were to pass on the *rath* or chariot of the goddess, with similar procession and observances to another village named Panderâ Pâiree. This village was to pass it on to another village and so on, and the goddess of the chariot thus marches from village to village. At last when the next village is very far off, and the distance too great for the villagers to go in a procession, they place the *rath* in a place surrounded by hills, so that the epidemic being shut up from all sides may die (અત વાઈ જાય) as the villagers say. If the villagers of a particular village are not on their watch and allow the new-comers to place their chariots near their village then they believe that there is a likelihood of the epidemic sticking to their place.

From a sea coast village like Tithal, the *ratha* is carried from place to place to interior villages till they get to a village from which the next village is very far off, and in that case the disease is believed to die out in solitude. But in the case of a village several miles distant from the sea, the ratha is carried seaward. It is taken from village to village seaward, and the last sea-coast village transfers the *rath* and with that the disease to the sea, where it is supposed to die. An instance of this kind came under my observation one morning during the Christmas holidays of 1894 at Jalâlpore near Naosâri. The *ratha* was brought there from an adjoining village the evening previous and placed on the outskirts of the town. The people of Jalâlpore had to remove it to the adjoining village of Bodâli, which had to transfer it to Matvâr, which in its turn had to convey it to Karâri (Matwâr), which was quite close to sea. The Karâri people were to convey the *rath* to the sea and there drown it.

In the matter of conveying the *rath* from village to village *there is generally* a friendly arrangement, the people of the

village that starts the rath giving a friendly notice of the coming of the rath, to the next village in order to enable the people to be ready to pass it on to the next village. But in some places the people of a village quietly and stealthily carry the *rath* to the outskirts of the next village and leave it there. If the people of that next village come to know about that, they come to oppose their approach with all force, being afraid that the rath might bring disease to their doors. A case of that kind came under my observation at Mâhâbleshwar in October 1894. On the Ghaut Road leading to Satara I saw four small toy-chariots lying on the side of the road with small wooden idols standing on each of them. The idols are generally decorated with coloured clothes. I was told that the village of Khelgar had several cases of cholera in the preceding hot weather and to drive away that disease the people had started the rath of their goddess named "Murri." They knew fully well that the people of that village would oppose the conveyance of the *rath* to their village, so they stealthily carried it at night and placed it midway at some distance from the village. The goat and the cock that accompany the *rath* are let loose, and nobody takes them away, the belief being that he who takes them away is attacked with the disease.

On the day when the *rath* was conveyed from Tithal the women of the village met at a small temple situated near the village well and lighting a lamp sang their favourite song imploring their village goddess to be kind towards the village. Their principal goddess was Jal-devi (જલદેવી), *i. e.*, the goddess presiding over water. This was perhaps because the temple was situated near the well of the village and because the village was close to the sea.

The song sung by the village women in honour of their 'Jal-devi' runs as follows :—

મારા સપનામાં ચારે સોવાસન
ચારેનાં હાથમાં રતન કુંકાવતી
ચારે ચાલી તે જલદેવી માઅેની સેવાકરવા
દેવો પૈસાની પતરી લેઈને પુંજા કરજોરે
દેવો સવાયાનો સીંદુર લેઈને સેવા કરજોરે

દેવો સવાયાનો સીંદુર લેઈને તીલાં કરજોરે
દેવો તાહડાં તાહડાં દહી લેઈને હીમાં કરજોરે.
ચારે ચાલેતો કુંકુના પગલા પરેરે
ચારે બોલેતો મોહોરેનાં મોતી ગરેરે.

Translation.

I saw four married girls in my dream. All the four had cups for red-pigment (1) in their hands. All the four went to offer their services to Jal-devi. (2) Worship the gods with pieces (3) of money. Serve the gods with *sindur* (a kind of pigment) worth a pice. Make marks on the idols with *sindur* worth a pice. Make the hearts cool with cold દહી (curd) When the four girls walked, their steps made the marks of red pigment. When the four girls spoke their lips dropped pearls.

The following are two other semi-religious songs sung at the village temple of Tithal:—

તાપીને કીનારે ઊભો વરલાનો છોરો
તાંએરે નીપજી બે મુરતીની જોરરે
ચાલોરે સાએલી આપણે જોવારે જાઈએ
દેવોની મુરતી કેવીક હોયરે
દેવીરે દેહરાંમાંની તુરજાએ માએએ
દેવોની મુરતી તેવીજ હોયરે.

Translation.

When the son of Varla was standing on the banks of the river Tapti, there appeared suddenly a pair of idols. Come on girls! We shall go to see them. Of what kind must be the idols of gods? The idols of gods must be of the same kind as those of the Toolja goddess in our temple.

કાશરો ને હરીચંદ્ર એએ ભણેરે
અમારી જલદેવીમાયને એટલુરે કહેજો
તીથલ ગામને એારે રમવા આવોરે
ઈ ઘોરો બાંધ્યો એજ વાતેરે

(1) The marks made on foreheads, &c., with red pigment are considered suspicious.

(2) The goddess presiding over water.

(3) *The people* generally take a vow to present to the gods small plates *of metals worth one*, two or more annas.

ઈ ઘોલે તે હીરનાં ગોપનારે
ઝુમતાં ફરકે બે ચાર
ઈ ઘોલો બાંધ્યો ઓજ વાતેરે.

Translation.

Karooro and Harichandra used to say, " convey this message to our Jal-devi goddess—

Come to play on the open place at Tithal.

A swinging seat is suspended for you on this road (4).

And silken tassels are suspended from there.

Two or four ribbons fly in the air on the seat.

The swinging seat is suspended on this road."

The songs of a tribe or community indicate to a certain extent, what amount of intelligence the people of the tribe possess. The short songs of the Tithal women show the poverty of their field of thought.

(4) The gods are believed to take a pleasure in these swinging chairs or seats. Hence their idols are at times placed on such seats.

H133
M

Omens *among the* Parsees.

By Mr. Jivanji Jamsetji Modi, B.A.

Of the omens believed in by the Parsees, some seem to be common to other native communities of Bombay and some are peculiarly their own. We will first speak of the good omens.

Good Omens.

When a man leaves his house on important business, or when he sets out on a journey, it is a very good omen if he meet a woman with a pot full of water either at the threshold of

his house or in the street. The man sometimes throws a coin into that pot to mark his appreciation of the good omen. Sometimes it is intentionally contrived by a female member of the family that the man should be so met, but the thing is so managed as to present the appearance of being accidental and unintentional. On the contrary, it is a very bad omen if the man meet a woman with an empty pot. Since the introduction of Vehar water into Bombay, there is very little room for this omen, because the sight of Parsee women going to the public well and returning with water on their heads is very rare. But it may still be seen in many Parsee centres in Gujarat.

It is considered a very good omen on leaving home to see a sweeper with his basket on his head.

It is a good omen if a man come across some fish while going out on an important business. Fish is the best and most excellent present that one can send to a friend or relative for good luck on festive occasions, such as birthdays, betrothals, and marriages.

It is a good omen to meet a corpse on the road, but a bad omen to see the fire that is sometimes carried with the corpse. I should attribute the latter to the fact that the Parsees consider it unlawful to burn a corpse.

It is a good omen if a serpent pass on one's right when he goes out on an important business. It is a bad omen if it pass by his left side.

It is a very good omen if a serpent pass over one's body when asleep.

It is a good omen to meet a washerman with a bundle of clean clothes, but it is a bad omen to meet him with his bundle of dirty clothes.

It is a good omen to meet a gardener or any other person with flowers or fruits in his hands.

It is a good omen to see a pot of toddy when going out on an important business.

When two or more persons are discussing important business, the striking of a clock, or the ringing of a bell, or the firing of a gun, is considered to be a very good omen for the success of that business. It is usual in such a case when the clock strikes, or the bell rings, or the gun fires, for somebody to call out "Hokam te Sahebno," *i.e.*, "it is the order of the Almighty," meaning thereby that the success of the scheme is destined by God.

When two or more persons are discussing a domestic affair, or any other subject that is the cause of disagreement among them, the striking of a clock, or the ringing of a bell, or the firing of a gun is taken by the party who is then speaking or stating his case as an additional proof of the truth of his statement. He exclaims in the midst of his speech, "Haknâm te Sahebno," *i.e.*, "Truth is the name of the Almighty," meaning thereby that God who is the source of all truth, supports his statement.

When a man sets out on a journey or voyage, it is a good omen if, when he has just left the house, somebody call out to him to "turn and look back." If he turn and look back towards the house or the speaker, it is a good omen, indicating that he will return safe and sound. If one does not turn and look back when called upon to do so, he is unconsciously made to do so by a dear relative on the pretence of having something important to communicate.

Bad Omens.

If a cat cross one's way when he is leaving his house for business, it is a bad omen portending failure. In such a case the man turns back a few steps, waits for a minute or two, and then proceeds to his business.

A sneeze is a bad omen. If a person sneeze when another is on the point of leaving his house for business, the latter postpones his departure for a minute or two. Sometimes he changes his shoes from one foot to another to avert the evil

influence of the bad omen. Sometimes he takes off his turban and then puts it on again after a few seconds. By taking off his turban he makes believe that he has postponed his departure.

If a person sneeze twice the omen is not thought to be so bad, because the second sneeze is supposed to counteract the evil influence of the first.

In the case of a conversation on an important business a sneeze is a bad omen, portending failure. If it is a female sneezing the omen is very bad and the failure certain; but if it is a male they console themselves saying, "Oh, never mind, it is the sneezing of a male."

The breaking of a chandelier or a globe at a family rejoicing is a bad omen, portending some evil.

The breaking of glass bangles generally portends evil, but it is a very bad omen indeed if the thing happen early in the morning or at sunset, or at new moon or on good and festive occasions. Among the Parsees the absence of glass bangles shows that the woman is a widow. A woman's glass bangles are broken on the death of her husband generally by a widow. Therefore the breaking of bangles is supposed to portend some evil to the husband.

The accidental falling off of a turban from a rack is considered an evil omen, portending some evil to the owner of that turban. On such an occurrence some lady calls out "Long life to the turban," wishing thereby long life to the owner of the turban.

The whining of a dog especially at midnight is an evil omen, portending some misfortune.

The peculiar noise which a dog makes by shaking his ears and the stretching his limbs is a very bad omen, portending failure of business which is then undertaken.

The cawing of a crow portends good as well as evil. If the cawing makes a peculiar noise which they call a "bharyo-avâj," *i.e.*, "a full noise," it portends good. Such a noise is also consi-

dered to foretell the arrival of a guest or the receipt of a letter from a relative in some distant country. If a good event occurs after the peculiar cawing which portends good they present some sweets to the crow. Another peculiar kind of cawing, especially that of the "kâgri," *i.e.*, the female crow, portends some evil. A crow making such a peculiar noise is generally driven away with a remark, "Go away, bring some good news."

The sight of an owl is a very bad omen, but that of a bird called "kâkeryo koomâr" (કાકરીઓ કુમાર) is a very good omen. I do not know by what name the bird is known in English.* It is a very rare bird. If a man happen to see it, he is sure to meet with success in all his undertakings for a year or more. I remember that three years ago when I was on the outskirts of Surat with a large party somebody cried out "kâkeryo koomâr, kâkeryo koomâr." All eyes were suddenly turned in different directions to catch a glimpse of the bird. It was seen by a few when in went off in another direction. There was a general stoppage. The cart-drivers and all the passengers got out of the carriages and went in the direction of the bird which fortunately for them was seen a little distance off, sitting on the turf. All looked at it to their full satisfaction. They were told that that year would be a lucky one for them. An old Parsee lady was specially anxious to show the bird to her son, who was ill and was ordered out of Bombay for a change. She thought the sight of this auspicious bird to be a very good omen for the speedy recovery of her son.

A shoe lying inverted is a bad omen, portending quarrel in the family. No sooner one sees a shoe so lying, he at once puts it in the proper position.

While on the subject of an omen portending quarrel, I may mention here that the giving of a pinch of salt into the hand

*The crow-pheasant, *Centropus maximus*.—Ed.

of another is also supposed to portend a quarrel. In order to avert that expected quarrel, after giving the salt required, you must pinch the other man on the hand. If the salt be passed to another man in a salt-cellar or a spoon it does not portend any quarrel.

The following, though it does not come strictly under the head of omens, can be mentioned here in connection with the subject:—

Auspicious days.—Tuesdays and Fridays are generally unauspicious days. Many persons will not begin an important work or start on a distant journey on those days. They are generally avoided for marriage, betrothal, and other happy occasions.

Auspicious side.—The East is the most auspicious side. When a dress is presented to a bride on marriage occasions she is made to stand with her face to the East. When a new set of clothes is put on on a child on its birthdays or other festive days, it is made to sit or stand with its face to the East.

Auspicious foot.—The right foot is the auspicious foot. When the bride first enters her husband's house, she does so with the right foot. Women who carry suits of clothes to the houses of brides or bridegrooms do the same.

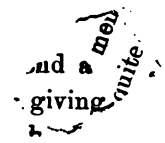
Auspicious language.—Women are always careful to use what they call "auspicious language." In order to do so they speak exactly the contrary of what they mean. For example, if you were to go to a lady to borrow a few rupees from her and if she has none to spare, she would not directly tell you "I have none to spare" but she would say quite the contrary, (મારી પાસે ઘણું ઘણું છે) *i.e.*, "I have too many." She thinks it unauspicious to say that she is without money. To say so in so many words would be an ill omen, portending poverty in future.

In the same way, when the members of a large family have gone out of the house, the old lady who remains at home, if she wishes to say that "the house looks empty," owing to the

absence of the other members of the family, would not say so directly, but in the contrary form of expression. She would say, (ઘર ભર્યું ભર્યું લાગેછે) "the house looks very full." She thinks it inauspicious to use the former expression. She is afraid lest mere expression of that statement be the forerunner of the death of members of the family.

Their anxiety to use auspicious language is manifested by many a Parsee mother, wife, or sister when she is speaking of the illness her son, husband, or brother. For example, a mother, who has a son named Jivanji, would not say, in case of his illness, "My son Jivanji is ill." She would transfer the illness to herself and say, "My Jivanji's mother is ill." She would think it inauspicious to speak of her son's illness in his own name, and would therefore like to transfer it to herself. Many a wife or sister generally uses a similar expression. They also generally use an expression wishing for a transference of the illness to themselves. "પગોરીને આપી દેજો," *i.e.*, "Cast it (illness) off and give it to me," is a common expression before the sick bed of a dear relative.

Again, another form of expression is also used in a similar case. For example, a mother who wishes to speak of her son Jivanji's illness would say, "My son Jivanji's enemy is ill."


nd a
giving

H133
M

On a few Superstitions Common *to* Europe *and* India.

By Mr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi.

'There is no nation in the world that has not at one time or another entertained a belief in superstitions of one kind or another. All ages and all nations present a few instances of men, of whom a writer of the 17th Century says :—

> " For worthless matters some are wondrous sad,
> Whom if I call not vaine I must term mad.
> If that their noses bleed some certain drops,
> And then againe upon the suddaine stops;
> Or if the bleeding fowl we call a Jay,
> A Squirrel or a Hare, but cross their way,
> Or if the salt fall towards them at table,
> Or any such like superstitious bable,
> Their mirth is spoiled because they hold it true
> That some mischance must thereupon ensue.

This paper has for its object the consideration of a few superstitions common to Europe and India. During my recent tour in Europe, and especially during my comparatively long stay in Paris, I came to observe that there were many superstitions which were common to the East and to the West, and which had for their origin a common cause.

The first class of common superstitions I wish to speak about are those that have some relation with involuntary motions or tremors of some part or other of the body, such as sneezing, an involuntary tremor in the ear, nose, cheeks, and feet, and with particular spots on the body. Sneezing is one of the acts of man to which superstitious notions have been attached from very old times. There seems to be a very general custom both in Europe and India to bless people when they sneeze. It is a custom spoken of by ancient authors, and is so old that even an ancient writer like Aristotle seems to be ignorant of its origin. It is said that in the time of Gregory the Great an epidemic prevailed in Italy, which carried off thousands. A similar epidemic is reported to have prevailed in the whole of Europe in the middle of the 14th Century. The complaint began with an attack of sneezing, just as it was the case with the influenza this year. Thousands were killed by that dire disease. An attack of sneezing was a sure precursor of the complaint. In times of these epidemics when a man began to sneeze, his friends and relations close by, knowing that the man was attacked by the disease immediately wished him health, and said some words to that effect. This seems to be the origin of the custom of blessing a man when sneezing. On such occasions it is not unusual to hear "Gud hjlep" (*i.e.*, may God help you) in Sweden, "Gesundheit" (*i.e.*, health) in Germany, and "A vous souhaits (*i.e.*, good wishes to you) in France. In a hotel at Vienna, where I stayed, on my sneezing, the porter bowed before me, and said some words. On enquiry I learnt that he did so out of courtesy and wished me good health. They say that at one time Englishmen also said something to wish good health to the man sneezing, but it is now considered rude to notice a sneeze simply because it reminds one of the past times of the plague. The Turks are reported to say on such occasions "Maschalla" (*i.e.*, may God be with you), and the Greeks "Kalli Ejia" (*i.e.*, good health). Coming to the further East, it is common among the Arabs to say

يرحمك الله Yarahamakallâh (*i.e.*, God be merciful with you.) It is usual to hear a Parsee lady say on such an occasion જીવશો or જીજે (*i. e.*, may you live long). Sometimes the good wishes are expressed in rhythmical lines as these. For example, if it is a child, Jamshedji by name, that is sneezing, the mother would say "મારો જમશેદજી જીવશો, દરજી વાગા સીવશો" (*i.e.*, My Jamshedjee will live long, and the tailor will prepare suits of clothes for him).

Thus we see that the origin of the custom of blessing a man on sneezing was the anxiety on the part of the nearest relations and friends to wish health to the men affected with the plague. The custom then extended to ordinary sneezing. But the blessing did not remain restricted to the wishing of good health alone, but was extended to other good wishes, such as that expressed by a Parsee mother in the above lines. Once I heard my hostess, at Paris, a good old lady, thus accost her son on sneezing, "Dix mille livres de rentes" (*i.e.*, may your [annual] income be 10,000 livres). Again, superstitious notions of good or bad omen are associated with sneezing in different nations. Dryden alludes to it when he says—

> "To thee Cupid sneezed aloud,
> And every lucky omen sent before,
> To meet the landing on the Spartan shore."

Milton alludes to the same belief when he says in his Paradise Lost—

> "I heard the rack
> As earth and sky would mingle; but
> These flaws, though mortals fear them,
> As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of Heaven
> Are to the main as wholesome as a sneeze
> To man's universe, and soon are gone."

In India also a sneeze generally portends good or evil. A sneeze just when a man is on the point of leaving the house for an important business is a bad omen. To avert the evil consequence the man generally waits for a minute or two, and then

starts again for his business. Among some classes of Hindoos a sneeze by one of the opposite sex is generally understood to portend some good. For example, if it is a male who is thinking of some important affair, the sneeze of a female portends success, but that of a male failure. If it is a female who is occupied by such a thought, the sneeze of a male portends success, and that of a female failure.

Next to sneezing there are other particular involuntary motions in the different parts of the body, which presage both in India and in Europe different consequences. In Europe, the itching of the nose generally predicts the arrival of a stranger. In France, I learnt that the tingling of the ear or a peculiar sensation in it, indicated that the person so affected was remembered or talked about by another person. If that was the case with the right ear they talked well of him; if with the left ill. In Austria, such an involuntary motion in the ear, predicted the arrival of a letter from a friend. The burning in the cheeks also indicated different tokens. In India, this indication is shown by an involuntary biting of one's tongue between his teeth. If the biting was on the left part of the mouth, he was remembered by a friend for some good; if in the right part, for some evil. Again, an involuntary movement of the eyelids predicted good or bad consequences. If the movement was with the left eye, it predicted something good; if with the right, it portended a quarrel with somebody, or a mishap. To avoid such calamity the person so affected rubbed his shoe over that eye seven times. The relation of the number 7 with this involuntary sensation in the eye reminds me of another superstition. It is generally believed that if a man gets a small pustule (ચાંદરી) over the edge of his eyelid, he is to expect seven of that kind one after another. To avert that attack, the person so affected must go at the dead of night to the house of a man who has married more than one wife, and knock at his door when he is asleep. The itching on the soles of the feet also indicates different consequences. Again, particular spots on the

body of a child, called લાંછન, predict whether the child will turn out fortunate or unfortunate.

The next class of superstitions common to both countries is the custom of taking omens from the flight of birds. This custom is as old as the time of Herodotus, who said that the ancient Persians took their omens from birds. The words which different languages possess for "good omen" show how far this custom was and is prevalent in many nations, ancient and modern. The root of our English word "auspices" (avis a bird) refers to the ancient Roman custom of taking the auspicium or inspection of birds before undertaking an important business. The Gujarati word for auspices, *viz.*, શગન (sagan), which is the same as the Sanscrit word शकुन (shakun), also means a bird. طیر (Taêr), the Arabic word for omen, also means a bird. So مرغوا (murgwa), the Persian word for omen, also comes from مرغ (murg), which means a bird. Thus the word "auspices" in English, શગન in Gujarati, शकुन in Sanscrit, طیر or طیرت in Arabic, and مرغوا in Persian, all tend to show that at one time the Romans, the ancient Hindoos, the Arabs, and the Persians took their omens from the movements of birds. In France, the sudden entrance of a stray bird into one's house or even the striking of a bird against a closed glass window or door with a view to enter into the house is considered a very good omen, portending a good event. In Vienna the proprietor of the hotel at which I stayed would not let the birds which made their nests on the different parts of his building be driven away, though they were a great nuisance to him and to his customers, because he took their presence in his house to be full of omens, and was afraid of bad events if those auspicious birds were driven away. I was told at Strassbourg that some of the houses near the Monument Kleber were regularly visited every year at the end of February or in the beginning of March by a species of bird called the stork, that built their nests there, and that the house-owners considered their presence to be full of good omen, and did not drive them

away though they committed a great nuisance. In some parts of England the screeching of the owl and the croaking of the raven predict a calamity. It is unlucky to see a single magpie but lucky to see two, which denote a merry occasion; three, which signify a safe and sound journey; four, which promise some good news; and five, which predict a good company. In India birds play a prominent part in telling omens. I have already spoken of some of these in my paper on "Omens among the Parsees."

Now just as the custom of blessing a man when he sneezes had a common origin, so there seems to be a common origin for the custom of portending evil or good results from the sight of birds. The origin is the migratory nature of many species of birds. The flight of birds portends the change of seasons, just as it is illustrated in the proverb, "One swallow does not make a summer." In cold countries the return of a particular kind of bird in the end of February or beginning of March is a forerunner of the setting in of spring, which after a dreary winter is welcomed with all kinds of rejoicings and feasts. In such countries the sight of those birds is considered very auspicious. In Strassbourg, I was told that the return of the storks was hailed with delight as a messenger of the approach of pleasant days of spring. Thus a certain class of birds which indicated the change of seasons began to be considered birds of good omen.

Again, the feature of the birds and their voice, whether good or bad, determined in many cases their fitness for serving as good or bad omens. For example, the ugly owl is everywhere considered a bird full of bad omen. I remember the peace of mind of even an English headmaster of a High School being disturbed at the sight of an owl on the roof of his school. He did not rest till he made it leave his premises by means of stones. A sweet singing nightingale is always welcome as a bird of good omen.

I have already spoken of the omen taken from the crow in

my paper on "Omens among the Parsees." I will here quote the following few lines which I heard a Hindoo woman speak to a crow :—

કાગ, કાગ,
સોનાચી પાગ,
દહી ભાતાચી ઈંડી,
શેલચી લંગોટી,
લોનચા તોંડી.

i. e., "Oh crow! oh crow! (I will give thee), golden rings on the feet, a ball prepared of curd and rice, a piece of silken cloth to cover thy loins, and pickles in thy mouth." A peculiar noise made by a crow is supposed to indicate the arrival of a dear relation or at least of a letter from him. When they hear a crow make that peculiar noise, they promise him all the above good things (*viz.*, ornaments, a suit of dress, and an excellent meal), if his prediction turn out true. In case it does turn out to be true, they fulfil their promise minus the costly part of it—that is to say, they give him some sweets to eat, but neither the promised ornaments nor the suit of clothes. It is said that when the promised meal is spread before the crows on the roof of the house or on an open place, all the crows gather round it, but do not fall upon it until the particular crow to whom the promise was made comes to the spot and begins to partake of the repast.

The third class of superstitions common to the two countries are those which are connected with the movement of certain animals. In some parts of England a sow crossing one's way when going out on an important business indicates disappointment, but not so if the sow is accompanied by her litter of pigs. In Sweden, a cat crossing one's way indicates a bad omen. To avert it they say on such an occasion, "Toi! toi! trollen till märkes," *i. e.*, "Pooh, pooh, may the evil spirit see it." In France, a black cat especially is very unlucky. In India, also, a cat crossing one's way when he starts for an important affair portends failure. To avert the evil, the man

waits for a minute or two, or turns back a step or two, or takes off his shoes and, after a short time, puts them on again. All this is to indicate that he had given up the work on meeting with a bad omen, and had started it again.

In Europe, as in India, the weeping of a dog is believed to presage death of a near friend or relative.

In both countries salt has several superstitions attached to it. In Europe, if salt, when being removed from the cellar, falls on the table, it is an evil omen portending quarrel in the family. In India, they do not like to pass salt from hand to hand, as it is believed to portend some quarrel. They generally hand it over in a plate. If they do pass it from hand to hand, the giver, after giving the salt, pinches the hand of the receiver to avert the quarrel and to end it in a pinch. The Greeks have a similar superstition about the soup. They do not pass it from hand to hand.

In India, salt is considered very auspicious on a joyous occasion. I have begun many a birthday of my boyhood with eating a few grains of salt the first thing in the morning. To eat a few grains of salt on your birthday before partaking of any other food portends a good omen, indicating that during the whole of the ensuing year you will always be sure of getting your નીમક રોટી (*nimak roti, i. e.*, salt and bread) or livelihood. It is with this idea of good omen that many a Parsee lady always puts in a little salt in the tiffin basket of her relatives who go out on a long journey.

I was told that it is with a similar idea that in Northern Europe many families when they leave their summer residences for their homes take care to place behind them a piece of bread and salt. It is considered a good omen to do so, as indicating that they will all return safe and sound to take their meals again at the house next season.

The next class of superstitions common to the two countries consists of those superstitions which aim at averting the influence of an evil eye.

In India, if a sick person were to go before a healthy one and to talk of his illness, the latter would mutter some words like this, ત્યાંનું ત્યાંજ, *i. e.*, let it be there and there, meaning thereby that the illness complained of may not go to him. In Italy the opposite party gently and imperceptibly taps from below the table at which he may be sitting at the time in order to keep off the complaint from him. In Italy, as in India, some people carry amulets to ward off evil. On occasions like the above, if the person is not at the table, and so not in a position to tap the table, he imperceptibly points his amulet to the person complaining about his illness to indicate, "May his illness remain to him and not come to me." In case the man bears no amulet he points with his two fingers thus ∨ to the speaker, thus wishing the illness to be repelled from himself.

In Greece, when they express their liking or affection for a child that is plump, well formed, and healthy, after doing so they spit on the ground to avert the influence, if any, of their evil eye drawn to the child by its beauty. In India, mothers make a black mark on the face of their child after dressing it to divert the danger of an evil eye to the black spot. Sometimes a mother, on hearing a man speak of the healthiness or plumpness of the child, says to the speaker, તમારા પગ તરફ જુઓ, *i.e.*, look to your feet. This is to avert the evil eye of the speaker from the child to his own feet. At Constantinople, I saw the house of a Greek bearing an old flag on a pole; some houses bear an old shoe. This is to avoid the evil eye of passers by. In India, it is not unusual to see old shoes placed on a pole in fields with a good crop. This is done with the same object. If a fruit tree bears good and excellent fruit, it is not considered good to point to that fruit with one's forefinger. If that be done, the tree will catch the evil eye of the person, and the fruit will get rotten, or the tree will lose its fruit-bearing capacity. One must point to the fruit not with his forefinger, but with the middle part of his thumb.

It is with a view to avert the influence of an evil and mali-

cious eye from the happiness and pleasure of the newly-married couple that old shoes are thrown upon them in England. In some parts of England it is lucky to throw an old shoe after a person going out on an important errand. In Turkey, when a sailor happens to leave a ship for good, some one from the rest of the crew throws after him an old shoe or any other old worn-out thing with a view that if he had an evil eye, he might bear it with him, or pass it over upon the shoe and not let it remain with them.

In Russia iron is considered to possess the property of averting an evil eye. When they suppose the evil eye of a person to be coming towards them, they immediately hold their keys in their hands. If they have no keys with them, they look for anything made of iron, and go and sit upon it or touch it to avert the danger.

In India, an iron nail is supposed to have this effect. Persons afraid of such an evil eye put in a corner of their house a particular nail for this effect. An old horse-shoe is sometimes met with on the very threshold of Indian cottages. It is to frighten away an evil eye or a ghost. Many Indian mothers put very small iron knives round the necks of their pet children to avert an evil eye. It is not unusual to see below the cot of ladies in accouchément a knife and a lemon. The metallic knife is believed to withstand the influence of an evil eye upon the blessed condition of the mother and the new-born child. To be the blessed mother of a child is considered so much a blessing and a meritorious deed in the East, and to remain barren is considered so great a curse that from the very time of conception every possible care is taken as well for her health as for her being out of the way of drawing an evil eye on her blessed condition. In her state of pregnancy if an eclipse were to happen, the husband is not allowed during the period of the eclipse to hold a knife in his hand or to mend his pen. If he were to do so, either intentionally or unknowingly, the child that would be born *would also* bear a natural cut or mark on some part of the

body. With the same idea of averting an evil eye by means of iron, it is not unusual to find a small knife or a nail or a scissor attached to the cradle of a child.

Among other miscellaneous superstitions common to the two countries we find the following:—In Europe, Friday is considered an inauspicious day for undertaking or beginning a new work. It is because Christ was crucified on that inauspicious day. In India also, Friday is generally inauspicious. It is because Venus (શુક્ર) from which the day શુક્રવાર (Friday) takes its name is an inauspicious star. A man under the influence of that star is generally unlucky. In Europe many take the number 13 as an inauspicious number at the table, because Christ was arrested after the last supper at which there were 12 apostles with him, and they formed the number 13. In India an odd number is auspicious and an even number inauspicious. Brides or bridegrooms are generally presented with an odd number of rupees, as 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, but rarely with 4, 6, 8, &c. The reason seems to be that the dead bodies are always carried by an even number of corpse-bearers. It is especially forbidden among the Parsees that the corpse be carried by an odd number of corpse-bearers.

In Europe, to hunters, the coming of an old woman from the opposite direction is a bad omen, indicating want of good game. In India, it is a widow that indicates a bad omen while starting for any important business.

In Europe, the breaking of a mirror portends a great mishap to the person to whom it belonged. In India, the sudden breaking not only of a mirror, but a chandelier or any other such glass work, especially on a merry occasion like a marriage or birthday, is very unlucky.

In Europe, a loaf lying inverted portends an accident to a friend at sea. In India, it is a shoe lying inverted that portends quarrel.

LANE MEDICAL LIBRARY

To avoid fine, this book should be retur
or [illegible] the date last stamped be[illegible]